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SUBJECT: CYPRUS WILL VOTE AGAINST APPROVAL OF STACKED BIOTECH CORN VARIETIES

REF: STATE 58647

(U) This cable is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Per reftel request, Post delivered on May 3 demarche on the May 10 EU Standing Committee vote on biotech corn to Alexandros Zenon, Acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We also sent copies to Panicos Pouros, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Takis Antoniou, Director, Department of Agriculture; and Nicos Georgiades, Director, Environment Service.

¶2. (SBU) Cyprus will be represented at the May 10 meeting by Giorgos Hartoutsios, Health Inspector at the Ministry of Health's Medical and Public Health Services. Hartoutsios was unavailable for comment as he had already left for Brussels. However, Irini Constantinou, Senior Environment Officer at the Ministry of Agriculture's Environment Service, informed us on May 9 that the Government of Cyprus would vote against the Commission's proposal to approve the EFSA-approved biotech corn variety, as it did at the April 19 vote on sugar beets. To date, Cyprus has voted against every new biotech application, mainly due to strong pressure from domestic environmental organizations. Post will report any further GOC reaction.

SCHLICHER